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Understanding Equine Psychology

Becoming a Horseman

Exploding the Myths

The Six Keys of Success

The Seven Games

The Four Savvys

The Parelli Pathway

Natural Riding Dynamics

Saddle Savvy

Pat Parelli

Linda Parelli

Stephanie Burns



Parelli Natural Horse•Man•Ship
PO Box 3729
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147
1.800.642.3335 www.parelli.com

THEORY GUIDE



Level
PARTNERSHIP

Level 1

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Understanding Equine psychology...

Horses don't think like people. That's why so many people have problems with horses. To get along with horses, be safer, and achieve personal excellence, we need to learn to think like a horse.

Put yourself in the horse's shoes. You are a prey animal. Your whole life is spent trying to avoid ending up as somebody's lunch. Your eyes are set on the side of your head so you have almost 360° vision...

You can see potential predators approaching from just about any direction, and you're always on the alert for them. You also have acute hearing and any rustle or unusual noise could signal the approach of a predator (things like rustling plastic can sound just like this!) For a prey animal like you, one second's hesitation could mean the difference between life and death.

You, the horse, are the supreme athlete. With your primary means of survival being escape, the first thought is always going to be to run. You make sure you are never in a confined or narrow space where one or more of your escape routes might be blocked. Your speed is all you've got, but if you are cornered you have one other option: fight for your life.

You have lightning quick reflexes, can strike, wheel and kick in almost a single move. You are not usually aggressive, will choose flight rather than fight, but if you have no option you will do whatever it takes to defend yourself.

Predators (humans) are easy to identify. Predators have eyes at the front of their

head, and walk boldly and directly straight up to things they want. They smell like what they eat (meat). They focus hard on you when they're trying to catch and kill you but most of them can't run very fast. It's only when they catch you by surprise or gang up on you that you haven't a chance.

The basis of equine psychology

To understand the psychology of the horse you need to understand his perspective on survival. Almost every reaction is based on this need to survive. So to put things into simple terms, there are only four things that are important to horses: 1. safety, 2. comfort, 3. play, and 4. food.

Once a horse knows he is safe, he will put effort into staying comfortable. If he feels both safe and comfortable, then he will play. Horses are extremely playful, social animals. The final part is food. All of this I'm describing is especially related to the horse's life in humansville, and it might help you understand situations like why trying to entice a horse into a metal cage on wheels (a horse trailer) using carrots doesn't usually work too well! He's more concerned with protecting himself!

Inside every wild horse is a gentle horse. And inside every gentle or domesticated horse is a wild horse. Never, ever, forget this. You can't change millions of years of nature's programming. You can't force a horse to like you, you have to convince him that you are his friend, his leader, and a part of his herd, even though you look like a predator.

For this reason, *The Friendly Game*^{#1} is one of the most important games to play

with a horse. If the horse is skeptical or afraid he is telling you that he still thinks of you as a predator. What you have to do is prove to him that even though you look and smell like a predator, you wouldn't hurt him even if you could. When horses are afraid, they're not afraid of being hurt, they're afraid of being killed.

Comfort and Discomfort

After safety, comfort and discomfort are what motivate and shape horse behavior.

Discomfort is what motivates horses to find comfort. In your *Level 1* lessons you will learn about the *Four Phases*. These *Phases* take comfort away in increments until the horse is motivated to respond in order to find comfort again. As soon as he does the right thing, the discomfort is released. He learns what he did in order to get that release, and next time does it again for the same result. Every communication with a horse involves affecting his comfort in some way, and the timing of the release is a critical factor.

A word about punishment: Horses do not respond to punishment. They don't understand anything that happens later than the instant they acted, and will become fearful of emotionally based actions from a predator.

Reinforcement is the key. Let's say the horse is leaning against a cactus: the instant he moves away from the pressure, he finds comfort. As long as he keeps making the wrong move (leaning against it), the pressure gets worse. Reinforcement has to happen in the moment. The difference between punishment and reinforcement, therefore, is attitude and timing.

Punishment is an aggressive act, a predatorial act, and often involves anger. Reinforcement is without emotion, is delivered as if the horse did it to himself (like running into your elbow when he tries to bite you!), and it is instant. It happens as a consequence of the horse's action rather than at our discretion. Punishment is delivered too late. Unless the reinforcement is instant, the horse will find it hard to associate it with his actions. As long as the human punishes a horse, shows anger or aggression, the horse will always perceive him as a predator, not to be trusted. It will affect the relationship.

Timing is critical to obtaining good results. The better the timing of release, the quicker the horse learns. As you progress *Level by Level* this will be one of the things you'll notice improving.

Your body language, learning to use the "Schwiegermutter" look (that means mother-in-law in German!) to drive a horse back, or use a smile to invite him forward is very important. Similarly being able to relax your body when the horse is right – both on the ground and on his back – will offer the horse comfort.

Horses use body language extensively in the form of a hard eye, ears back, nose wrinkled, mouth open to bite, a lifted leg to kick, a switching tail. They use very little voice except to express greetings, squeal in their games, or as a threat. We recommend that you avoid using your voice until after completing *Level 3*. The reason for this is to help you tune-in to your body language more and to be effective with it. Using your voice can actually prevent you using body language and *Phases* as well as you could. It also tends to make you express fear, frustration or anger. Keep it inside and smile. You'll learn to over-ride it.

How to not act like a predator

It's simple, just do the opposite of what you think you should do! Use reverse psychology. For example, in trying to catch a horse we tend to approach and approach and approach, and the horse just puts more effort into running away. Something as simple as turning your back or stopping and smiling every time the horse looks at you, and walking backwards if he approaches you, can make a big difference. He may even walk up to you in curiosity.

One time I was asked about a horse that was extremely hard to catch and the gentleman said he'd tried everything except lying down! I answered that maybe that's exactly what he should have done! The reason it would work is because lying down is exactly the opposite of what a predator would do.

Horses are constantly on guard against being caught or trapped. The best thing you can do is teach them to come to you instead of chasing them down. You will learn more about this in *Lesson 2*. In *Level 2* you will learn even more about the "Catching Game."

Approach and Retreat

As we've just mentioned, humans have a tendency to go directly for what they want, yet horses need you to approach and retreat until they feel safe.

For example, an ear shy horse won't let a human touch his ear, even get near it, yet will happily rub it on another horse or on a fence! The ear is not the problem, the predator is.

Horses are particularly defensive of their most vulnerable areas – around the head, behind the ears, the flanks, under the belly, below the knees and hocks, the hamstring area and under the tail. They know that one swipe of a powerful set of claws in any of these unprotected areas threatens their survival.

Rather than doggedly trying to grab the ear of an ear shy horse, do the opposite. Pretend you aren't interested in the ear, don't even look at it.

Work first on *The Seven Games* to gain the horse's trust and respect. Then, using approach and retreat, you can rub towards his ear and retreat before he gets bothered. Approach again, all the while keeping a smile on your face and rhythm in your movement. Look everywhere except at the ear! Pretty soon you can rub around the ear and the horse will be totally relaxed. You just can't rush it.

Approach and retreat are important keys, but only after you've used *The Seven Games* to create a relationship.

What's important to people is not necessarily important to horses

People tend to like clean, well-groomed horses that are stabled and blanketed. They keep them away from other horses so they won't get bitten or kicked.

Horses love dirt, and hate stables. Being clean isn't important (in fact they use dirt to keep the bugs off). What is important to horses is being safe, comfortable, and having someone to play with. Getting bitten and kicked is all part of herd life and socialization, and for young horses it is a part of growing up.

Think of it from the horse's point of view. What would you prefer: 10,000 acres

to roam and feed on, a herd for safety and recreation, or to be kept in a small space, in solitary confinement, worked daily or ridden now and then?

Many horses kept in confinement and isolation develop mental and emotional problems. So called "vices" such as cribbing (wind sucking), weaving, self mutilation, aggressive behavior, kicking at walls, popping lips and other repetitive motions like nodding the head or pawing relentlessly are indications of mental torment brought on by deprivation of freedom and social interaction.

Horses kept in confinement and isolation often emerge full of pent up energy and excitement. If not able to play dominance games with other horses, they'll want to play them with you! Striking, kicking, bumping and shouldering are not meant to hurt, it's just how horses play. Don't be surprised if your horse wants to play rough, he doesn't know how fragile humans are. Instead of punishing him for it, learn how channel it constructively by learning to play with him using *The Seven Games*.

In looking after horses we have a responsibility for their mental and emotional health as much as their physical, so:

1. Give your horse as much space as you can.
2. Allow him to socialize, or at least be in contact with other horses in some way.
3. Give him mental, emotional and physical stimulation. *The Seven Games* are the best way because they are the same games that horses play with each other in the herd environment.
4. Put more emphasis on his internal well being than his external appearance. This doesn't mean you neglect the external, it means you don't put the external horse

before the internal horse. We have bought or inherited horses that have had behavioral problems, socialization problems, and were even aggressive toward people. By turning them out with a herd on acreage, this behavior reduced dramatically or disappeared altogether in just a few weeks. It was just a matter of allowing the horse to fulfill his basic needs.

"Stable vices" are often treated like behavioral problems and horses are punished for them or made to wear elaborate contraptions. Some of them can be quite cruel, having spikes in them for instance. The reason horses in confinement develop repetitive behaviors like cribbing, weaving, lip-popping, etc. is because they are trying to stimulate the release of endorphins. The endorphins produce a natural high or numbness which help relieve the horse's misery. It's like self induced drugs which can become highly addictive because they represent some kind of solution for the horse.

Recent studies have shown that it's not so much the confinement as the isolation that produces these behaviors. Horses that live in tie-stalls where they are beside other horses don't develop these behaviors.

Horses are wild prey animals that have been domesticated by man. Whenever their basic needs are not cared for, it can affect them mentally and emotionally and this part is least visible to us. It is our responsibility to learn how to look after these needs in the horse to ensure his total well being while in our care.

Think like a horse: Left Brain vs. Right Brain

There are two terms I like to use to describe the thinking condition of a horse: left brain and right brain. When horses are "left brain," they are using the thinking side of their brain. They are calm, in a learning frame of mind, and can think their way through situations and requests.

When they are "right brain" they are not thinking, they are reacting on instinct. They are usually in the flight or fight survival mode where there is no time to think.

Playing *The Seven Games* teaches horses to operate more in their left brain. You'll be amazed at how much more confidence they will have. They'll become less unpredictable and less right brained.

When a horse does get right brained, there are things you can do to help him get left brained. *The Sideways Game*^{#6} and *The Yo-Yo Game*^{#4} are two very effective ways. A horse can run forward and stay right brained, which is why longeing is not very effective for calming horses down. But to go sideways or backwards, a horse has to think about it otherwise his legs get tangled or he runs into things. Just calmly persist until he makes the shift from right to left brain. When he does this, he will often lick his lips or "chew." (He'll also do this when he learns a new thing you've taught him.)

The herd instinct

Don't be surprised by a horse's need to stick with the herd or his desire to gravitate towards other horses. The herd represents safety and if a horse feels at all insecure he will always keep track of where the herd is or try to get back to it. He'll do the same

with the barn or the pasture because he has learned to feel safe there. He'll want to return to it whenever he feels unsafe, uncomfortable or stressed.

The more respect a horse has for you and your leadership, the less herd bound or barn "sweet" he will become. If you represent safety, he'll stay with you and not seek the herd. Sometimes this is not completely solved in *Level 1*, especially if it is an extreme case. But by the *Level 2* and *3 Programs*, it will be.

Opposition Reflex

Opposition Reflex is an instinct horses have that causes them to do the opposite of what a predator wants. It's a reaction of self defense. A horse will have *Opposition Reflex* under the following circumstances: fear, pain, anger, confusion, misunderstanding, and out of disrespect.

Examples of *Opposition Reflex* include: biting, kicking, rearing, bolting, bucking, pulling back, striking, opposing the bit, swishing the tail, grinding the teeth, laying ears back, refusing to move, pulling right when you try to go left, etc. Most people tend to think these are vices or signs of disobedience, but they're actually more related to the prey-predator relationship.

Learning about *Opposition Reflex* is critical to learning how to read a horse, as well as understanding why he is reacting. Yes, it does involve a lack of respect, but this is due to a lack of trust and esteem for the human.

People have *Opposition Reflex* too! They get tight in the mind, tight in the body, and dig in with all their "claws." They grab or jerk on the reins, and cling and clutch with

their legs (which scares the horse!). Fear, frustration, and anger are the main triggers. You will overcome *Opposition Reflex* when following this Program because you'll have more understanding, more skills, and be more emotionally fit and in control of your reactions. It takes Savvy.

Prey Animal Reactions

When prey animals get scared, confused, mad, frustrated or hurt, the "hole under the tail" gets tight and they feel compelled to move their feet. If they can't move their feet, they'll move their tail, jaw, lips, etc. This is known as displaced behavior.

Specific reactions are: pulling back, kicking, striking, biting, nipping, laying ears back, spooking, violent behavior, rearing, bucking, tugging on the reins, flipping the bit, chewing on the bit, tossing their head, jiggling on the trail, prancing, not moving, being sluggish, non-responsive, over-reactive, not trailer loading, rushing off the trailer, cranking their tail, resisting lateral flexion, resisting vertical flexion, bracing their neck, not stopping, not going, not standing still, cold backed, cinch bound, pawing while tied, sulling up, laying down, not opening mouth to bridle, hard to paste worm, hard to doctor, clamping tail, difficult to catch, whinnying to other horses, barn sour (actually barn sweet), herd bound, bolting, ear shy, hard mouthed, can't, won't, don't and yeah-but spots, over flexing, behind the bit, etc...

Predator Reactions

When predators get scared, confused, mad, frustrated or hurt, the "hole under the tail" gets tight, the feet do not move, they dig in, they freeze and all the "claws" go in.

Specific reactions (in horse people) are: the hands close quickly and lock onto the reins, the legs clamp to the horse's sides, the belly tightens, the seat tightens, breathing shuts down, they don't blink because they can't think, they take on the fight or defensive response (fetal position), they shout, growl, hit, kick, pull, jerk, yank, and their compete to win or "dominance reflexes" come into play.

Four Phases of Friendly Firmness

The *Four Phases of Friendly Firmness* process helps you communicate more effectively. It helps soft people become more assertive, and aggressive people to get firm without getting mean or mad. By taking a horse's comfort away in phases, you allow the horse time to think about his response, and ultimately to choose to respond at *Phase 1* or *2*. He learns that he can avoid the higher phases.

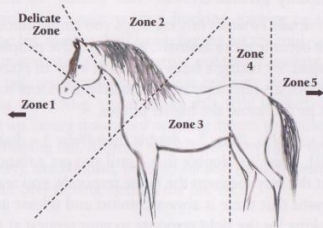
Phase 1 = minimal stimulus; *Phase 2* = double that; *Phase 3* = double that (without getting mean or mad!); *Phase 4* = double that (until you get a response). By quitting what you are doing at the very moment the horse responds, you teach him that he is right. The more he learns that there is always comfort and release as his reward, he'll get smarter about looking for the right response to your request at *Phase 1*.

Zone-ology

This is my system for finding the right position to be in when asking your horse to do something. It will help you to be systematic and find zones that your horse is defensive about.

A knowledge of zones also allows you to thoroughly teach a horse to yield to pressure. For example, in *The Circling Game*^{#5}, you lead *Zone 1*, and drive *Zone 1* to send the horse out and around, then lead *Zone 1* and drive *Zone 4* to disengage the hindquarters and bring him back to you.

There are six active zones on a horse and one delicate one (see the diagram below).



The front legs fall into *Zone 3* and the hind legs into *Zone 4*. The horse's hindquarters, including under the tail are in *Zone 4*. *Zones 1, 4* and the *Delicate Zone* also have an inside: inside the mouth, the nose, the ears, and inside the "hole under the tail." (Then there is the seventh zone, the horse's personal space.)

The Seven Games

The Seven Games are the games that horses play with each other. I have divided them into categories which help you learn how to play them in a logical order. They give you a language to share with your horse, they increase trust, and expose the hidden problems between you and your horse. They also help you fix those problems.

Most people never ask very much of their horse, or they pretty much do what the horse wants just to keep the peace. They may even have become so used to the horse's disrespectful behavior that they now accept it as normal. This Program will change all that. You will become more conscious of how your horse does or does not respond. You'll learn how to teach him to respond within a relationship based on love, language, and leadership.

Become a Horseman...

How can you describe a Horseman? A Horseman thinks like a horse. A Horseman understands the horse's perspective and does not blame him for behaving like a prey animal. A Horseman knows how to have special relationships with horses based on love, language and leadership. A Horseman is a teacher for horses, with unlimited patience. A Horseman is half-horse, half-man. He has savvy. Real horse savvy.

The journey to becoming a Horseman may be one of the most challenging and rewarding ventures you will ever undertake. It's about developing yourself mentally, emotionally and physically, and becoming the kind of human your horse would respect, trust, and admire. It means so much more than just becoming a good rider. It means learning how to savvy horses – inside and out.

Most people are focused on training horses, and while horses are "trainable," to think only as far as this leaves a huge area of untapped potential. I'd like you to think in terms of starting a relationship and developing a partnership that is based on love, language and leadership.

Horses are extremely intelligent. When encouraged to think and use their brain they come alive, their horsenality shines through, and they have as much fun being with you as you do with them. Instead of training, I want you to start "communicating." Once you have a language with your horse, you can ask him to do almost anything... and you'll never have to train him again.

In developing this Program I have retraced my steps for the past 30 years and looked at the insights and lessons I've learned that were turning points for me with

horses. With over 100,000 students in my Program at the time of this writing, I have continued to hone these insights to find their essence.

I developed this Program so people could learn the same foundations of horsemanship that I learned, but in a tenth of the time because it won't take you on those long and confusing detours that I went on while searching for the truth!

Horses are wonderful teachers. They are also a wonderful metaphor for learning communication skills that will impact your personal and business relationships too. In essence, you will learn relationship and communication skills.

This Program is designed to teach people to teach their horses. To be a good teacher for a horse, you have to think like a horse so you can present things in a way he will understand and appreciate.

The Process of Change

Developing as a Horseman is a fascinating, wonderful, and sometimes painful process! I am not going to pretend for a moment that there won't be times that you'll feel frustration, doubt, anger... some of you more than others. But it's all growth. It's all the things you need to see and experience in yourself in order to overcome those limiting emotional barriers.

There are many people who come into this Program because they are frustrated with their horse, and want him to change. But as they progress, their biggest breakthroughs come when they realize that they are the ones that need to change. There's a great saying: "for things to change, first I must change."

When we think and act more like horses, we create a thing called "rapport." Horses like people who act more like horses.

In learning how to create rapport and understand horses, you have to let go of ego, or "shoulds" (my horse should do this or should do that). You have to take responsibility for when things are not going right. Either you weren't clear, or you didn't set the horse up for success, you didn't have enough preparation, or you asked him to do something he wasn't ready to do. There's a hundred ways to take responsibility, and this is usually the hardest part for many people at first. It's easier to blame the horse! But that won't get you anywhere.

There are often four distinct phases a person tends to go through before they make a change:

1. Denial, 2. Blame, 3. Anger, and 4. Chaos.

Denial - "It can't be me, it must be the horse." Or, "I'm not having a problem," really means I just don't go there! This one is called avoidance behavior and it will keep you right where you are... no progress!

Blame - "Yep, it's the horse." "He's stubborn, ruined, incapable, lacks talent." Or maybe, "It's the Program! I never had these problems before." Usually because you've never touched this part of the horse before - his mind, his emotions - and he's been holding out on you!

Anger - Beating the horse, kicking him, jerking on the reins, and things much worse than I'd rather bring up. On the other hand, some people may experience self-anger, and this is just as destructive to oneself. You don't need to blame the horse or

yourself to the point that it upsets you.

From here, it's easy to plunge straight into Chaos. This is the darkest hour before the dawn. This is when there is only one way out, and that's to accept responsibility for being part of the problem. Only then is it possible to make the change... and strangely enough, it's only then that the horse will make the change!

This may seem like an extreme example and I'm not suggesting that it's going to happen to you. But I've been around long enough to be able to identify the patterns. If you can become conscious of the process of change you'll learn to recognize when you are experiencing one of the phases and make the adjustment you need to.

Knowing this has helped many of my students. As soon as you find yourself in one of those phases, identify it, name it. Make a conscious statement that is the opposite of that thought and laugh about it! Cut it off at the pass. Don't let it drag you down the road toward anger and chaos.

Seek help and support, do whatever you can to get out of it. At the same time, don't be surprised by it. You know now that it could happen at any time and at any stage of your development when you get frustrated or your ego gets dented. Be open and willing to change. Whatever you do, don't give up on your horse or yourself!

Above all, don't be hard on yourself or think you've failed because you let it happen. Rather, see yourself as being on the verge of a breakthrough. It's a very exciting place to be. And thankfully, horses are very forgiving. Everyone is doing the best they can with the information they have.

This Program is going to ask you to do the opposite of many of the things you do

now. It's going to ask you to make changes, make mistakes, and have experiences full speed ahead. If you can follow the Program without trying to analyze or compare it to what you normally do, you'll have a better chance of avoiding the phases of denial, blame, anger and chaos, and you'll see the results more quickly.

You've seen the results people are experiencing with the Parelli Program, and to get the same results all you have to do is follow the Program. Every time you find yourself saying "Yeah, but I usually do it this way," or "My horse can't..." you're going to stop making progress.

The successful student...

We have studied our most successful students and found that once they willingly accept their responsibility in the horse-human relationship – that the way their horse is responding or not responding is in direct proportion to their level of savvy – they make progress at warp speed.

They have a lot of Try. They can laugh at themselves. They see every challenge the horse presents them as an opportunity to learn. They are focused and not easily distracted. They are goal oriented but not impatient or direct line. Rather than focusing totally on the result, they can take things one step at a time, systematically and patiently building their skills, until the day they can do amazing things with their horse.

This is not a common attitude to learning, but it represents the ideal learning attitude, as it shows flexibility and a willingness to change.

To optimize learning, we need to learn how to learn to open ourselves to new information.

Exploding the myths...

Age old secrets and all kinds of advice have been handed down through the ages, and very little of it is based on understanding the true nature of horses. This is part of the reason why people tend to have so much trouble with horses. Here are some of the most common myths.

Myth 1. "Horses are not smart."

Truth: Horses are actually very intelligent (on the prey animal scale). They are quick learners and they never forget. They are prey-animal smart, so it's unfair to measure them on the scale that includes predators such as people, dolphins, and dogs. Their whole existence and therefore the way they think is very different.

Have you ever been out-smarted or out-maneuvered by a horse? It happens every day and not only to the inexperienced! Horses are born to out-think predators. This is why people can have so much trouble with them. They can't catch them, can't shoe them, can't control them, can't bridle them... they get kicked, bitten, struck, or charged at. Horses can make a million moves to avoid being trapped and they can read people like a book. They know what you are going to do before you do it and their brain is programmed to do exactly the right thing to foul you up and get away!

Once on a horse's back, there's not much that they can do to defend themselves except run, buck, rear, or throw themselves down. They run out of options and of course the good rider is still there. But on the ground, they are quicker and wiler than anything. Fredy Knie, world famous horse trainer from the Swiss Circus Knie told me that of all the circus animals he's trained, horses are the most difficult to train well.

Myth 2. "Punishment and reward is an effective training approach – you have to show a horse who's boss."

Truth: Punishment does not work for prey animals and "showing a horse who's boss" in our predator way only causes intimidation and resentment. What does work with horses is reinforcement.

Here's the difference. Reinforcement is instant. It's like an electric fence. It gives you instant feedback about your decision to touch it and you learn your lesson fast. Also, reinforcement has no emotions or attitude attached to it.

It's hard for people to get firm without getting mean or mad, and when a horse reads this emotional charge to the action it will result in one of two reactions: fear, or aggression. Pretty soon a smart horse will recognize the emotions as your weakness and he'll start pushing your buttons because he knows you lose control.

The more you can do with a smile, the better. Use comfort and discomfort, and reinforcement (see *Understanding Equine Psychology*). Don't get upset or angry. In fact, if you feel that way, pet your horse and apologize to him and then leave him alone. Start again only after you've calmed down totally and developed a new perspective.

See every challenge or resistance your horse puts up as an invitation to improve your skills and savvy. Treat it as a game – your horse does!

About showing your horse who's boss... There's a different way to do this. Prove to him that you are alpha, by his definition. This means you have to be calmer, smarter, braver and more athletic than he is, as well as more mentally, emotionally and physically fit. You need to have leadership qualities and offer friendship, securi-

ty and play. Then your horse will respect you and follow your lead – without question. This is what becoming a Horseman is all about.

Myth 3. "Horses are safe and simple."

Truth: They are safe and simple, but only when you have savvy. The 'safe and simple' assumption is a dangerous one, and it's the reason so many new horse owners get hurt. It's also why 80% of all new horse owners get out of horses in their first year. They start feeling unsafe, get hurt, or become totally frustrated through lack of understanding and the fun starts to fade.

Savvy means safety. It's what you put in your head rather than on your head that will keep you safe. You need to understand horse psychology, their behavior, their instincts, their needs, their nature. Then very little will surprise you and you won't make the common mistakes and misjudgements that are responsible for 99% of horse related accidents. You'll know what to do and what not to do.

Myth 4. "Carrots and kindness will spoil a horse."

Truth: Carrots and kindness are important. They show a horse you care, they bring out the soft side of you, which in Parelli terms is *The Friendly Game*^{#1}. It is the most important game because "horses don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

It's also important to note that kindness without control can be dangerous. Once a horse is no longer afraid, he can learn very quickly how to play dominance games

with people. This is where *The Seven Games* gives you a great balance of kindness, friendship, and dominance.

Myth 5. "You shouldn't work with a horse for more than 20 minutes."

Truth: You can't work a horse for more than 20 minutes... but for how long can you play? The key word here is play. Working is not fun for a horse. They get bored, they stop putting in effort, they probably dream of being in the pasture playing with their buddies. Some horses will play all day long.

Playing *The Seven Games* and giving your horse challenges to work out and giving him a chance to think his way through things becomes very stimulating for him. You'll see his expression change and he'll start looking forward to his time with you. A dull horse will come alive and an emotionally insecure horse will become braver. Sometimes cutting off the session too soon doesn't get you the result you need. I often play with horses for two or three hours at a time and, using the following secret, the results are fantastic...

The secret to spending more than 20 minutes with your horse is this: make it fun, intersperse plenty of *Friendly Game*^{#1}, have periods of rest (even five to ten minutes can do it), use him as an armchair, for transport, or just hang out. Make sure you spend undemanding time with your horse as a balance.

Myth 6. "You just saddle up and get on, no preparation is needed. You just kick to go, and pull to stop."

Truth: Don't just saddle up and get on. Preparation is the key. This is what pre-flight, or in this case, pre-ride checks are all about. You need to check your horse out mentally, emotionally and physically to see what side of the corral he got up on.

How is he feeling today? Is he good natured and willing, or feeling a bit disrespectful? Is he full of vip and vigor, or a bit slow? Is he limping, stiff, or sore in the back? You need to check all of this out, and using *The Seven Games* is the best way.

Sort it all out before you ever get on his back. The easiest bucking horse rides are made from the ground! If you can learn how to tell when your horse is mentally, emotionally and physically ready to accept a rider on his back your riding experiences will be ten times safer.

If you don't kick to go, and don't pull to stop, what do you do?

If you were a horse, would you like to be kicked and pulled, or would you rather be softly squeezed and lightly lifted? The technique you use will make all the difference to your relationship. Instead of kicking you will learn how to teach your horse to respond to the softest squeeze to go. He'll learn to stop when you quit riding and lightly lift the reins. In higher *Levels*, you won't even need the reins.

Myth 7. "Tough horses need tougher bits."

Truth: Do tough horses really need tougher bits? Big bits are used when the common belief is that to get control of a horse, you have to over-power him. Having to use a bigger bit is a sure sign you have little or no communication with your horse's mind. By following this Program, you'll be guided into developing real communication with your horse and, ultimately, any horse. When you have this you won't need big bits because your horse won't be running away or trying to escape from you. In fact, you won't need any bit to have control. You'll be able to choose a bit for greater refinement, not greater force.

Myth 8. "Spurs are for speed."

Truth: One of the questions I'm often asked is: "My horse is lazy and slow, should I get spurs?" Spurs are not designed to make a horse go faster, if they did, race jockeys would wear them! A lazy horse may respond to the use of spurs at first because they are sharp, but it won't take long before he returns to his lazy ways and becomes resentful!

Spurs are designed for enhancing lateral maneuvers (going sideways) and increasing suspension. They are most valuable in higher *Levels* of horsemanship. I recommend that you complete the first three *Levels* of this Program without spurs so you learn how to motivate a horse using communication, understanding and psychology rather than mechanics. When you and your horse are ready, spurs will be introduced for greater refinement, not for greater force. Again, for communication – not pain.

Myth 9. "Lean in the direction of the turn."

Truth: Why is it that we do the opposite to change directions when on a horse's back than what we naturally do on our own feet?! If you walk a straight line then make a turn to your right, which foot are you leaning on to push off with? The left foot. Your weight is on your left foot so your right foot can lift and shift its position to take up the new direction. It's the same for your horse.

In this Program we'll teach you how to 'push' your turns instead of leaning into them. It will feel so much more natural for your horse, your turns will improve, and your horse will start to use his hindquarters rather than lean on the forehand.

Myth 10. "English and Western have nothing in common."

Truth: The difference between English and Western is like the difference between a violin and a fiddle. It's the same instrument, you just hold it in a different position and play a different style of music.

The horse is the common instrument in English and Western. He doesn't care what you wear, but the communication signals are the same. There might be some different maneuvers but ultimately we are looking for a soft, willing, well-balanced horse that works from his hindquarters.

We can learn a lot from studying other styles of riding. The English rider could learn about better stops and turns. The Western rider could learn about lead changes and lateral movements. Being open to a universal form of teaching your horse will help you develop an equine athlete that you can do anything with, do it well, and have your horse enjoy it.

The Six Keys of Success...

There are six keys to success. The degree of your success depends on maximizing each of these keys. Some may come more easily to you than others, but you need to keep your focus on all six to get the formula right.

1. Attitude

The attitude that truly works with horses is positive, progressive, and natural. How you interpret and react to what happens, and what you perceive as success or failure is dependent on your attitude. You can take it badly, or, you can be unaffected by it and instead look forward to a positive outcome. This Program will help you learn how to stay cool, calm and collected so you can:

- Stay positive when you are frustrated – if your horse defies you or gets the better of you...
- Keep making progress when progress seems to feel slow...
- Keep it natural when many “experts” tell you that a bigger bit, tie-down, gag, or martingale is the answer.

2. Knowledge

It's what you learn after you know it all that really counts.

Most people think expertise with horses, more than anything else, involves only riding. But riding is less than half of what you really need to know. There is so much more to know about horses... how they think, how they learn, what's important to them, how to communicate with them, how to help them reach their potential.

The Parelli Program expands your knowledge in four very important areas with horses: *On Line*, at *Liberty*, riding *FreeStyle* and with *Finesse*.

Natural results are accomplished through communication, understanding and psychology rather than through mechanics, fear and intimidation.

3. Tools

No gimmicks, no gadgets. Keep it simple, kind, and effective. I recommend the use of only a very few tools, but I'm very particular about their quality and function.

I designed the tools we use because no one else was making equipment for communication.

When you have savvy you need very few tools to be effective with horses, and you become more and more particular about the tools you use.

The tools I recommend are made only from a certain gauge of smooth, soft yet strong yachting braid; natural leathers and sweet iron metal. They work for people and for horses to improve the quality, effectiveness and sensitivity of communication.

4. Techniques

The techniques I will share with you ensure that all communication with your horse is clear and understandable.

Horse training techniques can be forceful and cruel. You are going to learn techniques for communication. Therefore, every technique used must have the following ingredients: the right attitude, focus, feel, timing, and balance. They are not forceful. They allow a horse to think and choose his response.

Quality of feel is almost impossible to learn through traditional methods. However, this Program will cause this quality to evolve in you naturally. You will learn when and how to use steady and rhythmic pressure, rhythmic motion, comfort, discomfort, *Phases*, and release.

5. Time

You have to invest time to improve yourself and your horse. With this Program, what took me 20 years will take you just a few because you won't have to spend time learning lessons the hard way!

How much time do you get to spend with your horse?

Is it always enjoyable and stimulating? Would you enjoy spending more time if it was more interesting and rewarding? Would it help if the time really counted for something?

Even after a break in time, you and your horse can pick up where you left off – there's no gap. This is because you are creating a relationship... It would be like picking up a conversation with an old friend you hadn't seen in a while. The foundation of love, language and leadership is the basis of this.

6. Imagination

Learn to become more imaginative, more sensitive, and more creative when you play with your horse.

Horses get so easily bored and frustrated by people when it's just the same thing

every time, over and over. They need to be positively stimulated at three different levels: mentally, emotionally and physically.

Horses need to play and have fun when they learn. Over the span of the three *Levels* in this Program there will be a multitude of tasks laid out to help you take a more imaginative approach to the development of yourself and your horse.

"If your horse is recreation for you... can you be recreation for your horse?" Imagination will make all the difference. Your horse will thank you for it!

The TSTL formula

Talent... is what you are born with.

Skills... can be developed.

Try... is intestinal fortitude, that never-give-up factor.

Luck... I spell luck: w-o-r-k and define it as 'when preparation meets opportunity.'

I've used the TSTL formula countless times over the years, both on myself and on my students.

Take a self-assessment and score yourself (from one to ten) on each TSTL factor. Anything under a seven is what you should put more effort into. Natural Talent is the only thing you can't change, but it is not the most important thing.

You may not have been born with much natural Talent with horses, but score high on Skills and Try. You'll do better with this than if you had a high rating on Talent and low ratings on Skills and Try.

Work hardest at developing your Skills and Try. These are the two areas people are most likely to fall short in. They don't put enough effort into developing their Skills, and they can run out of Try in a heartbeat.

My Program will take your repertoire of skills to a high level, and continued self-improvement is what will help you develop your Try.

The more mentally, emotionally and physically fit you become, the more Try you'll have... But mostly it's about determination and focus. Never lose your focus. Never let anyone talk you out of what you want if you believe in it.

Understand also that horses are very good at out-persisting people because they'll do whatever it takes to survive. All they have to do is resist long enough until the human gives up.

Horses can become pretty good people-trainers! Don't give up. Don't get mad. Be passively persistent in the proper position and never, ever run out of Try.

Important Tips for Success

- Establish your goal, what you want to achieve, and focus on it.
- Follow a program, study as close to the source as possible.
- Set time goals so you keep on track, example: Complete *Level 1* within three months.
- Never lose your focus. Try harder than anyone you know.
- Study with people who support your growth.

- Don't try tasks that are way above your *Level* nor begin the Program with an extremely difficult horse (such as a stallion). Get yourself to *Level 3* with one horse. Then you will have the savvy to know how to safely and successfully deal with different and more difficult horses.

The Seven Games...

The Seven Games is one of the biggest breakthroughs when it comes to teaching communication between horses and people. It is a systematic approach based on the same games that horses use to establish friendship and dominance. The horse that consistently "wins" all seven games becomes alpha. We need to learn how to become our horse's alpha using the same strategies as horses do, rather than through force, aggression and intimidation. Horses are natural followers. They look for natural leaders. Under good leadership they lose their fear, become calmer, more confident and responsive.

Before you ever get on a horse's back, you should get to know him. The myth that has lead so many of us to just saddle up and get on is what gets so many people into trouble.

A horse has every right to give you trouble if he doesn't know you well enough, or objects to the way you treat him. Don't just get on him! First establish a relationship. You need connection, understanding, and acceptance from your horse. You need a language through which you can communicate and be understood.

It is your responsibility to become your horse's leader and teach him to become

calmer, smarter, braver, more athletic, to trust your judgment, try whatever you ask him without resistance, yield to and from pressure, negotiate obstacles, go sideways and back up with ease.

The Seven Games will help you to do this, and it will also serve as a diagnostic system to help you find holes in your horse's development, to know why they are there and how to fix them.

Every single thing you do with your horse is one or a combination of *The Seven Games*. If you can become skilled at all seven, so good that even your horse is impressed, there'll be no limit to what you can do or learn to do with a horse given the time, the attitude, and the pathway.

I've given each game a number because it's important at first that you play them in order when you're learning and teaching them to your horse. In fact, if you are having a problem in one game, you may need to go back and improve the previous game!

The first three games are "principle" games. They are to the horse's language what the alphabet is to ours.

The Friendly Game#1

This game convinces your horse that you will not act like a predator and that you are friendly and can be trusted. You need to gain his confidence and be able to touch him with a friendly "feel" everywhere on his body. Any areas he is defensive about tell you if he is suspicious of you. By using approach and retreat you can progress to where you have permission to touch every inch of every zone without forcing him to

endure it, to where he actually enjoys it. You can then advance to using ropes, sticks, flags, coats, (anything you can think of) to help him become braver, more confident and less skeptical. *Keys: smile; rhythm; approach and retreat; desensitization.*

The Porcupine Game#2

This is how you teach a horse to follow a feel and move away from pressure applied with your fingertips or the *Carrot Stick*. This game prepares him to understand how to respond to communicative feel (steady pressure) from the rein, the bit, the leg, etc.

This pressure is applied with a steady feel (not intermittent poking) and steadily increasing intensity until the horse responds, at which time the pressure is instantly released. It is applied in *Four Phases*, each *Phase* getting progressively stronger. Releasing only when the horse responds. In this way, it's the release that teaches the horse he made the right move. Reward the slightest try with instant release, rubbing (as in the *Friendly Game#1*), and a smile.

The Porcupine Game#2 needs to be taught in all Zones. *Keys: concentrated look; steady pressure; Four Phases.*

The Driving Game#3

This game teaches the horse to respond by following a suggestion, where he moves without you touching him. It can be effected at increasingly longer distances as you advance through the program. Again, *Four Phases* are important, with no change in rhythm, and as soon as the horse responds, you relax and smile. It's kind of like "con-

structive spooking," but your horse must not be afraid. Learn to drive your horse in all directions using the Zones. *Keys: Concentrated look; rhythm; Four Phases.*

The next four games are the "purpose" games. Now that you have established the "alphabet" games you can combine them to form "words" and "sentences" to have a language with your horse.

The Yo-Yo Game#4

By wiggling the 12-foot *Line*, send the horse backwards away from you. Then bring him forwards toward you in a straight line by combing the rope. There are *Four Phases* and "hinges" that come into play when being effective in this game (more on this in your *Level 1 Pocket Guide* lessons).

Play *The Yo-Yo Game#4* slowly at first, on flat ground. As it gets better, get more provocative and play it on uneven ground, at a faster pace, over a pole or log, or on a longer rope.

This is how you teach a horse not to run over you when leading him and develop suspension and self carriage in his movement. It will also help to counter balance forward-aholics, improve your stop, and develop a slide stop. *Keys: Four Phases; straightness; responsiveness; imagination.*

The Circling Game#5

Do not confuse *The Circling Game#5* with longeing! Longeing sends a horse around and around, in endless circles and is totally mindless. *The Circling Game#5*, on the other hand, stimulates the horse mentally, emotionally and physically, and teaches him to stay connected to you. It keeps a softness in the line between you and works more mental connection as well as developing a positive pattern or performance pattern of curves and circles.

There are three parts to this game: the *Send*, the *Allow*, and the *Bring Back*. After you send your horse out onto the circle, relax and leave him alone. Smile and pass the rope around your back giving the horse the opportunity to take responsibility for maintaining motion on the circle. Do not fall into the trap of clucking him along, as this creates a dulled out attitude in the horse.

Do a minimum of two laps and a maximum of four, otherwise your horse will get physically fitter, but his mind will go to pot. I use all of *The Seven Games* to get a horse physically, mentally and emotionally fit.

Disengagement of the hindquarters is very important. This is how you will bring him back. *The Circling Game#5* will teach a horse control – mentally, emotionally and physically. *Keys: Three parts: Send, Allow, Bring Back; Four Phases; responsibility for the horse.*

The Sideways Game^{#6}

Note this is sideways, not side pass. It is about teaching the horse to go sideways equally to the right and left, with ease. Teaching your horse to athletically move himself sideways is important for several reasons: for developing suspension, for lead changes and spins, and as a counter balance for "forward-aholic" horses (like ex-race horses!). Start slow and right, use a fence or rail to prevent forward movement. (You'll learn how to do this without a fence in *Level 2*.) *Keys: a good Porcupine and Driving Game; long rope; Zone 1 and Zone 4; Four Phases.*

The Squeeze Game^{#7}

Horses by nature are claustrophobic. They are afraid of any small or tight spaces because this spells disaster for prey animals. *The Squeeze Game^{#7}* teaches your horse to become braver and calmer, to squeeze through narrow spots without concern. Start with a large gap and as your horse gets more confident, make the space smaller and smaller until it is just three feet wide, like the bay of a horse trailer.

You can use the principle of *The Squeeze Game^{#7}* to teach the horse to jump, go into trailers, wash bays, racing barriers, roping boxes, bucking chutes, help him get over cinchiness... *Keys: walk backwards; start with a large space; Four Phases; practical challenges and applications.*

The Four Savvys...

Savvy is natural knowhow. It's understanding times ten. It's horse wisdom. It's knowing horses mentally, emotionally and physically. It's knowing when to be, where to be, why to be and what to do when you get there.

Savvy means you know how to relate to horses, how to handle them, how to solve and prevent problems both on the ground and on the horse's back, in any situation, at any time.

Savvy is what helps you become excellent with horses. After studying with some very savvy Horsemen, I've determined four areas in which they have unmistakable skill. I call these areas *The Four Savvys*. There are two on the ground, and two when riding:

On the ground:

1. *On Line* (with ropes of varying lengths),
2. *Liberty* (no ropes and, ultimately, no corrals).

When riding:

3. *FreeStyle* (without contact, without using reins),
4. *Finesse* (with contact, precision and vertical flexion).

Horses need you to be savvy in all four areas. Most people are not and this is why they have so many problems with horses. If one or more of these *Savvys* are missing in your horsemanship, it is like a chair with a leg missing. It would be unbalanced.

The objective, therefore, is to seek balance. To become skilled in all *Four Savvys*.

Parelli is continually developing better ways to help people reach personal excellence with horses. In pursuing excellence, riding is less than half of what we need to become good at. The other half doesn't involve riding at all and yet that is where the greatest accomplishments can be made.

On Line prepares you with the skills you'll be using for *Liberty* (when there are no lines attached). *On Line* and *Liberty* develop the foundation for riding horses on a loose rein and even bridle-less (*FreeStyle*). *On Line*, *Liberty* and *FreeStyle* prepare horse and rider for *Finesse*.

This approach works at developing respect, impulsion and flexion in the horse (and in that order). It progressively develops a solid foundation for higher *Level* skills. It prepares the horse and human for more advanced and refined maneuvers, while at the same time maintains a healthy mental, emotional and physical state in the horse.

On Line

This means handling horses with the help of a line or rope. We use various lengths of rope according to the different *Levels* of skills and stages of the horse's development.

Using the line, we can communicate forwards, backwards, right, left, up and down, eliciting all kinds of maneuvers until they become willing and fluid. Where most people just lead and longe, *On Line* is a whole different science based on playing with horses on the ground. Through *The Seven Games* you'll teach your horse and bond with him like never before. While using these ropes, you learn to act as though you don't have them at all. This is what prepares you to advance to teaching at *Liberty*.

(The *Level 1*, *Level 2*, and *Level 3 Programs* explore *On Line* skills at 12-feet, 22-feet and 45-feet respectively.)

Liberty

Liberty teaches your horse to come to you, follow you, have purity of gait, make graceful transitions, do flying lead changes, spins, slide stops and develop self carriage using the round corral. You'll graduate to larger areas and finally to wide open spaces! This is what *Liberty* is all about.

Playing with and teaching horses at *Liberty* is a lot of fun and can appear almost magical as your cues become more and more subtle. Horses really enjoy it too. It teaches you how to communicate with no strings attached as well as build a mental connection stronger than any lead rope.

(The *Level 2* and *Level 3 Programs* explore the *Liberty* savvy. In the *Level 1 Program* you are preparing your horse and yourself for this.)

FreeStyle

In simple terms, *FreeStyle* means riding with loose reins. This style of riding naturally develops your independent seat and teaches the horse self carriage.

On Line and *Liberty* are the preparation for *FreeStyle*.

I believe that everything including straight lines, circles, lead changes, stops and jumps, should be taught on loose reins first to fully develop the horse's self carriage and responsibilities.

Furthermore, 80% of your riding time should be *FreeStyle* or your riding skills and your horse's mouth will suffer. *FreeStyle* riding helps your horse learn to behave more like your partner and not take over or take off.

Can you imagine how it would feel to have such a light, responsive and willing horse?

Taken to its fullest expression, excellence at *FreeStyle* is being able to do anything you want with your horse – bridle-less.

(*FreeStyle* skills are built progressively through all three *Levels* of the Parelli Program.)

Finesse

This is about ultimate refinement. It encompasses riding close to your horse, with concentrated reins, with a soft, polite and willing feel, and with vertical flexion. Here is the “finished” horse and rider.

Finesse cannot be forced on a horse. It has to be developed naturally using the formula of respect, impulsion and flexion. It involves a great deal of savvy.

Riding with *Finesse* means that your cues are virtually invisible. Nothing you do requires more than four ounces, and as the horse becomes an extension of you, he weighs not more than a thought. *Finesse* should be light, beautiful, like a dance, without force. Dressage, reining, jumping, cutting... all these require ultimate concentration, finesse, and performance from both horse and rider. They also require collection, which is much more than a “head set.” Collection is the sum total of mental, emotional and physical collection.

(*Finesse* skills are built mostly in the *Level 3* Program.)

A horseman has savvy in all four areas

The goal of the Parelli Program is to explore each *Savvy* at different intensities until completion and balance in all four are achieved at *Level 3*. At this *Level* you'll have the kind of foundation that enables you to go on and do anything you want with your horse. *Anything*.

Ground Skills		Riding Dynamics	
On Line	Liberty	FreeStyle	Finesse
LEVEL 1			
LEVEL 2			
LEVEL 3			

The Parelli pathway can take you where you want to go... naturally

This is a program that teaches "savvy." It is a pathway to attaining your horsemanship goals...naturally. There is no other program in the world that starts where this Program starts... or takes you where this Program can take you.

I have developed this Program during more than 30 years of training horses and teaching people all over the world. During this time, I began to realize that if I could teach people a deeper understanding – a real savvy about horses – they'd not only solve their frustrations, they'd unlock their potential with horses too.

Savvy can be learned. I learned it, and I was not "a natural" when it came to horses, I just had a lot of desire. In this Program I'm showing you the path that I took on my own journey to savvy, but without the wrong turns and tangents that slowed me down.

This Program is firstly about self development. The first three *Levels* are designed specifically to teach the human and can be studied through this home study Program. After *Level 3*, the Program is more about teaching horses, performance, difficult horses, colt starting, etc. This is when it becomes much more detailed and intense so hands-on teaching is essential.

In all, there are 10 *Levels* that lead to mastery. How much savvy you want to have is up to you and the goals and dreams you have in mind.

Level 1 (Partnership)

Level 1 is about love, language and leadership.

You learn to play *The Seven Games*, break down the prey-predator barrier, create a language with which to communicate with your horse, and teach your horse on the ground the things you want him to understand when you are on his back.

The *Level 1 Program* can be completed in three weeks to three months* (no previous horse riding experience is necessary).

*These estimates are based on being able to spend a minimum of 6 hours per week with your horse.

Level 2 (Harmony)

Impulsion, positive reflexes, harmony. Develop more feel, better timing, and more harmony with your horse.

This *Level* branches into the *Four Savvys* – *On Line*, *Liberty*, *FreeStyle* and *Finesse* – taking horsemanship into realms far beyond what people do with horses every day.

It brings your horse into harmony with you. He becomes increasingly softer and more willing with "positive reflexes."

This *Level* also explores impulsion, which is why you'll feel less and less need to use the reins for control. Instead, they become a valuable tool for more subtle communication.

After completing the *Level 1 Program*, the *Level 2 Program* can be completed in six to eighteen months.*

Level 3 (Refinement)

This is where respect, impulsion and flexion come together. Communication with your horse becomes so subtle, it's almost invisible.

This *Level* explores the development of vertical flexion for increased power through engagement of the hindquarters. You'll learn how to do everything with more accuracy and finesse, in all *Four Savvys*, taking each one to a whole new level.

After completing the *Level 1* and *Level 2 Programs*, the *Level 3 Program* can be completed in six to eighteen months.*

The following levels are not available for home study:

Level 4 (Versatility)

Horsemanship, different horses, young horses, difficult horses, performance.

Each of these areas is in itself a deep subject. It involves greater study time and personal tuition with myself and my top instructors.

This *Level* is for those with professional goals, or for the extremely focused individual pursuing higher horsemanship goals.

Versatility is not something that can be accomplished in a year. After completing the first three *Levels* (the foundation) the *Versatility* program will take at least three to four years due to the diversity of the study and exposure to many different types of horses and situations.

Level 5 (Unity) and Level 6 (True Unity)

Expand your relationship with one special horse, taking him to ever greater heights, while continuing to develop greater expertise within the categories defined by the *Versatility Level*.

While I will still guide you along the pathway, these *Levels* are more about time, experience, and allowing the horse to teach you.

Levels 7, 8 & 9 (Mastering True Unity)

It's what you learn after you know it all that counts. You'll have developed *True Unity* with more than one horse, and this is where natural horsemanship begins to take on an art form.

True Unity with horses is what compels the most dedicated of horsemen. Mental, emotional and physical unity with a horse is something very special. It's not the result so much as who you have to become in order to achieve it.

Level 10 (Ultimate Unity)

Level 10 is a lifetime study. There is no one to judge you but the horse himself. The ultimate in natural horsemanship is to become one with nature, and the horse is nature in its finest form.

Natural Riding Dynamics...

To ride like a natural you need to let go of many of the things you may have already been taught to do: heels down, hands down, push, push, push. The stiffness of 'educated' riding will be replaced by a more natural ease, grace, and feel, and by a connection and flowingness with the horse. This is about turning loose so your horse can teach you to get into harmony with his motion.

The first steps for learning to become part of your horse...

Don't just saddle up and get on! Learning to become a part of your horse starts on the ground, making sure your horse is in the mood (via *The Seven Games*) and that he's in tune with you mentally, emotionally and physically. Learn how to check your horse out to make sure he is safe to get on. Using *The Seven Games* in this way is like pilots using a pre-flight check before they fly a plane.

A horse that is calm and thinking is going to be much safer to ride than a horse that is full of pent up energy or is tense, hyped up, or afraid.

In using *The Seven Games*, you'll learn how to redirect pent up energy, and get your horse thinking and calm again without stopping him from doing what he has to do. Think about it... if you'd spent the whole day in a stall and then finally got out you'd want to buck and run and stretch and play. This horse doesn't need discipline as it will just cause him to fight for his freedom. He needs something constructive to do with his energy.

The tense, scared, flighty horse is a bomb waiting to go off. You don't have to get on – you shouldn't get on – until this horse is calm and attentive. Some horses take

longer than others to get in the right mood and sometimes this depends on your skill level. In any case, take the time it takes so it takes less time. You and your horse will both survive and enjoy the experience!

There have been some of my students with extreme horses that have taken my advice and not ridden them for as long as six months. During that six months their horse made dramatic changes, mentally and emotionally. They became calm, confident and secure with their human. Then they were safe to ride. Now, that is an extreme case. But if you do have a horse that's pretty difficult, don't be in a hurry to get on. Your patience will pay huge dividends in the end.

Let go of old habits

Riding in the *Level 1 Program* will mean letting go of old habits like kicking to go and pulling on the reins to stop and turn. You'll learn much more effective ways of communicating directions to your horse, ways that will also feel more comfortable to the horse.

Sometimes, the best way to break a habit is to dissolve a pattern. If you are used to riding with two reins, whenever you have two reins in your hands you'll do what you always do - pull back on them! So, in the first lessons you'll be riding with just one rein, and in a halter! (Don't be alarmed, you'll be well prepared by following the lesson plan).

Not only will this totally revolutionize the way you ride, it will give you more control than you've probably ever had. I can tell you about hundreds of people who used

to ride their horses in big bits and tie downs, and have all kinds of control issues, who have found themselves having calmer horses and no more control problems in a very short period of time... just by following this Program.

Horses that won't stop or that get out of control are not dumb and insensitive, they are confused. They don't understand what you want. They are acting like prey animals, are defensive and trying to escape. You can change all this. With a little psychology (*The Seven Games*), a lot of preparation, changing patterns, learning to relax your own emotions and muscles, you'll have a different horse – because he'll have a different human.

Bruce Lee said that in learning to master yourself, you don't need to train your muscles, you need to train your mind. There is as much mental and emotional development to be learned here as there is physical.

As you proceed through the lessons on *FreeStyle Riding*, you'll notice that very little resembles normal riding lessons! What I want you to learn is how to be a good passenger before you ever try to guide your horse. And when you do start guiding, you'll ride with your whole body, with focus, without depending on the reins for balance and control. You'll learn the most natural ways to cause your horse to go forwards, backwards, sideways, and turn right and left.

The objective is to learn to become a part of your horse.

Saddle Savvy...

Learn saddle savvy, saddle safety, and other things that will impress your horse!

Believe it or not, a horse can tell how much savvy you have just by the way you saddle him.

In the *Level 1 Program*, you'll learn key points about saddle safety and fit, as well as the friendly and savvy way to saddle your partner.

General Saddle Safety

Check your saddle for signs of wear and tear. The main parts to check are where leather and metal come together, such as at the cinch or girth and at the stirrups. If the leather is at all split, dried out, or worn thin, replace it. The same goes for broken stitching – repair or replace it. It's cheaper than a medical bill!

Make sure that the tree is not broken or bent anywhere and that there are no sharp tacks coming through the top side or underside of the saddle. Check that the horn on a Western saddle is secure and firm, and always make sure that your cinch is clean of lumps and burrs and that it's not twisted in any way.

Western Saddle Tips

Off-side billets or latigos are much safer than a single strap for attaching a cinch. The added safety comes from having a double wrap around the rigging and the cinch itself,

and being able to move the position of the strap periodically so it doesn't wear out in one spot.

English Saddle Tips

Check the padding (stuffing or packing) to make sure there are no collapsed or lumpy areas. Look at your saddle upside down to make sure the gullet is straight and has no curves or twists in it. Again, check the girth and stirrup leathers where they meet metal and make sure they are not worn thin.

Saddle Fit

The best way to check saddle fit is to look at it on your horse without a pad. Place two fingers flat on the wither and then push down on the pommel or horn and see if it touches your fingers. It should remain clear. Look from the back and see that the saddle sits straight and evenly on your horse's back and that it's not crooked.

Unfortunately, most saddles "fit" a horse when he is standing still, the bars of the tree laying along the back muscles basically matching their concave shape. However, once he is moving, because his back flattens out or rounds, it no longer "fits" and can cause all kinds of problems from pressure. The result is a sore back or defensive back that hollows out or stiffens in an effort to avoid contact from that pressure.

The other problem is that most saddles sit right on the muscle, and even if it is not hurting the horse, it is uncomfortable at best. A saddle needs to be designed much wider so it sits more out on the rib cage and fits the horse once he's in motion. The right saddle and the right pad can transform your horse. He'll be freer to move and be

able to round his back as he should when he starts to move. It will also be the end of sore back problems.

In terms of fit, the wider the gullet the better. A narrow gullet or tree will exert pressure on the back muscles, cause your horse to hollow his back and lose muscle definition.

In Western saddles, the Wade tree is flared at the front which takes undue pressure off the shoulders. In English saddles, most people choose medium-narrow in width, which may make it look like the saddle fits better, when in fact it is more constricting on the spine. Most trees are not wide enough for the horse's comfort. The narrower the tree, the less a horse can flex his spine laterally and vertically as he moves. Also, the narrow tree causes muscle waste due to the pressure it exerts and from the horse hollowing his back in defense. It's not a positive thing that your horse "develops withers" from riding, it's a sign that he's hollowing out to avoid pressure from the saddle.

Believe it or not, custom fitted saddles are not the best kind, unless you can ask for a very wide gullet, with unusually wide-angled bars, shaped so it will fit your horse when he's moving and flexing his spine. This means it will not "fit" when the horse is at rest. The saddle designed to perfectly fit your horse at rest is the kind that will give him the most problems when he's in motion.

I understand that most people are not able to afford a custom-made saddle, let alone convince the saddle maker that he should change the shape of his tree! In this case, you should look for a good wide gullet, as wide as possible and then use an excellent pad underneath.

After riding, check for dry spots on the horse's back where the saddle was. This will tell you about ill-fitting saddles and pressure points where the pressure has blocked the sweat gland orifice. There are two things to do about this:

1. Change your saddle for a better quality one, and one with a much wider gullet;
2. Get a pad that evens out pressure points by lifting the saddle off the shoulders and trapezius muscles, and that helps distribute weight evenly (air filled is the best because it redistributes pressure instantly and constantly).

Place your saddle so the first point of contact from the bars of the tree is behind the shoulder blade, by at least two inches.

In the situation where the horse has an awkwardly shaped back, the flatter the withers, the more rounded or flatter the back, the harder it is to keep a saddle secure! You'll need to become particularly athletic when mounting or riding because the last thing you want to do is get a narrow saddle or tighten the girth to suffocation point!

Saddle Pad

Give it the fingernail test. If you can feel your fingernail through it, it is too thin and won't alleviate pressure points.

Personally, I use a revolutionary saddle pad that has air chambers I can adjust in order to compensate for asymmetry from one side to the other. It lifts the saddle up and off the back muscles and allows them to flex and move more freely.

For English saddles, again, the air-filled pad is the best that I have found. It lifts

the saddle up off the back taking pressure off the withers and back muscles, and cushioning the horse's back.

Important: Don't over-pad, using too many layers. This can make your saddle lose its stability, and it actually doesn't alleviate pressure by all that much. It's like putting on three or four pairs of socks to protect against shoes that don't fit right. There is not much you can do to protect a horse from a badly made or badly fitted saddle.

Think very seriously about investing in a good, well-made saddle and pads that really protect your horse's back and allow him to move and flex more freely.

(Talk to the Parelli offices and Parelli Professionals about recommendations and advice in selecting saddles and pads).

Choosing a suitable saddle style

English, Western, Endurance, or Australian? It's a matter of preference and practicality.

If you have already decided on a costume you like to wear (English or Western), the saddle choice will be easy. But if you are "non-denominational," what should you choose? A saddle should fit your purpose, your seat and your horse.

Choose by function.

If you mostly want to do long trail rides, or casual riding – choose Western, Australian, or Endurance. These saddles are designed for riding all day (as per the cowboy and Australian stockman) and have better weight distribution on the horse than a more specialized saddle such as for jumping or dressage. In making your final

choice, refer to my advice in the previous sections on saddle and pad savvy.

If you want to do a lot of jumping – choose an English jumping or all-purpose saddle. You'll enjoy not having a saddle horn or thigh rolls to bump into! It's a lighter saddle built to allow you to get your weight up and forward to be in harmony with the horse's center of gravity when he jumps.

For a dressage focus, you'll want a saddle with straighter flaps that help you to get your legs back and under you.

If you want to work cattle, or do roping – choose Western, you'll need the saddle horn.

Also, within each of these categories there are specializations such as dressage, jumping, and all purpose in the English categories; and roping, cutting and ranch work/buckaroo in the Western categories. Keep in mind, the more specialized your saddle, the less flexibility you have for doing other things.

Certain breed categories (mostly gaited horses) also have their traditional saddle such as the Paso Fino and Saddlebreds. These saddles tend to fit more into the long day's ride category. They don't usually have a saddle horn which is essential when working with cattle.

As you progress through the Parelli Program and start to do much more with your horse, you may wish to have both an English and a Western saddle (especially after the *Level 3*, if you are wanting to progress on and beyond into the fourth *Level*) but up until then, whatever style saddle you have will do you just fine.

Pat Parelli...

Born in California's Bay Area, Pat Parelli was obsessed with horses at an early age. When Pat was just 13, a horseman and trapper named Freddie Ferrera of Livermore, California, recognized Pat's talents with horses and took him under his wing. During the summers he would teach Pat about how to be "natural" with horses, dogs, and cattle, and how to live in parallel with nature.

Pat's horse career began simply by working in stables from the age of nine. If there were horses, Pat would be present, enthusiastically helping with whatever he could, ears open for every ounce of information. He even started to develop his own ideas about raising foals and training horses, an unusual thing for a young boy.

At the age of 17, Pat launched himself into competing in rodeos; his favorite event was bareback bronc riding. Being a natural, coupled with great coaching from John Hawkins, Pat won the Bareback Rookie of the Year title in 1972 — his remarkable buck-off average was just 4%. After watching many rodeo athletes trying to move on from riding the circuit, Pat was determined to find life after rodeo. A career in training horses seemed logical and he started a business that concentrated on starting colts.

However, like many trainers before him, it wasn't long before financial frustration set in and Pat found himself on the verge of getting out of horses altogether. He was also frustrated by not being true to his heart; this was not how he wanted to train horses — by processing them like inanimate objects.

Then three significant events changed Pat's life.

He met Tony Ernst from Australia, who was not only a student of the horse but was also a disciple of the Kung Fu martial arts and a master musician. Through Tony, Pat learned about inner power and focus, and the Kung Fu principles of discipline, body control, and mind-body mastery.

Pat began to work under the tutelage of Troy Henry, a master horseman from Clovis, California, who specialized in training and developing both horse and rider for competition using psychology and communication. Troy Henry opened up a whole new world to Pat by helping him understand the horse's mental and emotional processes as a prey animal, as well as the true dynamics of horsemanship and how they applied to performance horses. Troy was intolerant of people who did not know how to think like horses, but once he saw how invested Pat was in making the change in himself, Troy started to teach Pat what he knew.

Pat took an interest in developing mules to be able to perform like horses. Mules taught Pat the importance of reverse psychology, the principle of safety and comfort as the only real incentives for equines, and developed in him more savvy about how to get a prey animal to "want" to perform. Mules also taught him about patience! In 1980, Pat founded The American Mule Association.

Being an intense student of horses and horsemanship, Pat had begun to develop his own style of teaching and expanding these principles. He also became interested in showing reined cow horses and was successful in reining and cutting events with both horses and mules. Pat came very close to winning the 1981 NRCHA Snaffle Bit futurity on a mule named Thumper, which resulted not only in a training career boost but a rule change banning mules from the competition. Pat was invited back the next year to give a demonstration with a mule doing the same reining pattern, but this

time without a bridle!

One of the greatest frustrations Pat experienced in training horses was handing them back to their owners, who typically lacked horsemanship skills and understanding. He found that if the rider didn't have enough savvy, the horse would regress. After much soul searching, he finally decided that he couldn't continue training horses in this typical manner. He knew he had to find a way to help people become more savvy with horses.

Pat understood that horses were easy once you comprehended how they thought and why they do what they do. He realized that if humans could achieve mental, emotional and physical fitness and use horse psychology to communicate effectively, they'd have fantastic results with horses. The challenge, therefore, was for Pat to become an effective teacher of people in order for them to acquire the kind of horsemanship skills that made him so successful.

Pat soon discovered that he had a significant talent in finding the right words, stories and humor to explain what he understood about horses. So he turned his attention even more to helping people instead of training horses. He began to give "lessons" but had no idea that one day he would be able to help people on a much larger scale.

In 1982 three close friends, Dr. Bob Bradley and Jeff and Kat Hobson, convinced Pat to take his teachings "on the road" to spread his knowledge of communicating with the horse's mind. He practiced for weeks to formulate his ideas into a presentable package. Pat was a natural; he inspired people to strive for greater things with their horses in a simple, safe and fun way. He taught what he knew about horses: equine

psychology, keys to success, riding dynamics, and most importantly, how to be savvy with horses — naturally.

In 1983, after wowing the crowd with a spectacular bridle-less reining demonstration at the California Livestock Symposium, Pat met three men who were to become major influences on his life: Tom Dorrance, Ray Hunt and Ronnie Willis. Pat hosted several of Ray Hunt's clinics and spent time with both Dorrance and Willis, all masters who became mentors to Pat.

A few years later the world's leading equine behaviorist, Dr. R. M. Miller, observed one of Pat's bridle-less demonstrations and quickly recognized that Pat's concepts aligned strongly with his own philosophy about influencing the horse's mind. Dr. Miller's prediction was that by the time Pat reached the age of 40, he would have become one of the best horsemen and teachers the world would have ever known. Realizing Pat's extraordinary talents, Dr. Miller authored a three-part series on Pat's concepts in *Western Horseman Magazine* entitled "A New Look at Old Methods."

Spreading steadily out from the west coast, Pat responded to interest all over the United States. His continued collaboration with Dr. Miller and an invitation from promoter Bob Berg took him to Australia, with Canada, Mexico, Hawaii and Europe as the next destinations. With hundreds of clinics under his belt, Pat's program had passed the test. His systems proved universally effective for both people and horses of all levels.

From here, it became a case of the tail wagging the dog. People were asking for more — more information, more clinics, more supportive programs. It became clear that some kind of program was required that could help horsepeople of all skill

levels, no matter where they lived.

This demand led to the development of videos and a program for students to follow that would help them progress, a level at a time, to a point of considerable expertise with horses if they so desired. Pat also started developing, and continues to develop, an international program for Parelli Professionals, increasing the accessibility of his teachings through qualified and reliable sources.

It's Pat Parelli's vision that one day the term "natural" will no longer have to precede the word "horsemanship." Horsemanship does not need to be mechanical or forceful, nor does a person need to use fear, intimidation, anxiety or pain to train horses. With enough savvy, horses and people can achieve fun, excellence, truth, results, respect, trust, harmony, and unity — naturally, through understanding, communication and psychology, rather than force, fear and mechanics. In Pat's words, "If all I did was teach you to think like a horse and truly understand their psychology, you'd have the keys to be able to do whatever you want with horses, and to win their hearts."

Naming it "Parelli Natural Horsemanship," Pat has launched a benchmark program for horses and horsemen that has influenced hundreds of thousands of people and horses around the globe. Just a very few years ago, nobody had heard of natural horsemanship. Today, the Parelli Natural Horsemanship program has become one of the most exciting revolutions in horsemanship, attracting attention from all corners of the industry, including the Cadre Noir of Saumur in France, Olympians Karen and David O'Connor, the USET Three-Day Eventing Team, Captain Mark Phillips, reining horse legend Craig Johnson, French dressage master Michel Henrique, and many, many more notables throughout the world. In November 2003, Pat traveled to

Buckingham Palace in London to present a private demonstration for Her Royal Majesty The Queen.

In his travels, Pat met Linda Paterson in Australia at a clinic where Linda brought her uncontrollable horse. It was Linda's last hope for this horse, and indeed, it was a humble act to bring a top dressage horse to a "Yankee" cowboy for help. This meeting was also a wonderful beginning to a romantic tale, and now the two are married, traveling the world teaching people to teach horses.

Pat's 21-year-old son Caton Ryder Parelli often appears with Pat in demonstrations and expos throughout the United States, and in the summer of 2002 Pat proudly walked his daughter Marlene down the aisle at her wedding.

Pat and Linda reside at their magnificent ranch in Pagosa Springs, Colorado during the summer and fall, and at their new residence in Ocala, Florida during the winter. They are always "at home," however, when with each other and surrounded by their horses and dogs.

Linda Parelli...

Linda Parelli has been honored not only for her educational achievements, but also for her passion and vision — catalysts for attaining her *Level 4* and becoming one of only five people in the world to achieve a *Parelli 5-Star Professional* rating. She stars in all the Parelli national and international presentations, and has recently been a part of the National Geographic Explorer special, "America's Lost Mustangs," and a special horsemanship series with Pat Parelli on RFD-TV. Much of the Parelli written material and educational systems have come from Linda's enthusiasm and talent for making this meaningful information available in a fun and easy-to-learn format.

Born in Singapore, Linda Parelli was enamored with horses from the first moment she can remember. She moved to Australia with her family when she was 12, where her eagerness and zeal were pretty much what kept her glued to the saddle. Her ponies, relatively typical of most kids' first steeds, were a bit of a problem and did their best to 'unglue' her. But that didn't keep Linda from jumping them over everything in sight, gleefully enjoying every moment of it.

As an adult, Linda was introduced to dressage. Her horse Regalo was a very difficult mount; actually, he was beyond difficult – he was dangerous. He bolted, was hard to stop, impossible to control, and he reared. Sensitive and high-spirited, Regalo and Linda's other horse, Siren, an ex-race horse with intrinsic control problems, were both extremely challenging. It was determination and love for her horses that kept Linda exploring a world of possibilities, and ultimately they all succeeded in the show ring. But as Linda progressed in the competitive world, her horses became more and more resistant. She noticed the significant attrition rate that accompanied higher levels of

dressage, the fights between rider and steed, and the unhappiness these horses displayed.

Her concern for her horses was always paramount as Linda continued training and competing. She hated all the mechanical devices she was told to use in order to control her horses, but grudgingly accepted this 'training' as normal because she didn't know what else to do. The more she observed the horse world, the more it made her heart ache. Trainers, horses, and Linda seemed to be trapped in the system without any alternatives. It was frustrating, at best.

As fate would have it, Linda was in a tack store one day, purchasing yet more 'magical' gadgets. While waiting in line to pay, her eyes wandered to a video of a horseman doing some pretty fancy riding. "I watched that cowboy with total disregard, standing there in my polished dressage boots and jodhpurs," Linda says, laughing. As she continued to watch, her curiosity piqued as the guy in the cowboy hat executed perfect flying lead changes. He then performed beautiful slide stops and spins, presenting a picture of total harmony during his fire-charged presentation. That image was the epitome of the relationship with horses Linda had dreamed of, full of cooperation and grace. Now she was glued to the screen, and only then did Linda realize that this cowboy was riding bridleless. In an instant, she was fire-charged herself.

"Who's that cowboy? Does he have a book or video? I want it all!"

"Oh, he's some Yank from America who's coming here to give a clinic," was the reply.

Linda signed up immediately for the course with Pat Parelli. In that very first clinic, she began to understand the true nature of horses, and got immediate, positive

results with Regalo, the horse who had challenged her for years. To put it mildly, her life has changed in a myriad of wonderful ways since then. A few years later the dressage rider and the cowboy were married.

Parelli is the main focus of Linda's life. "I'm having more fun with horses and accomplishing more than I ever thought possible, and I want to share that with everyone," says Linda, smiling knowingly. "Parelli teaches people how to be a partner with their horse, and how to find love, language and leadership with their equine friend. It's a kind, natural relationship with horses – and you get to play with them while you're learning together!"

"I also want people to know that it doesn't take talent, it doesn't take bravery and it doesn't take years to get there. It takes heart, desire and access to the right program."

Stephanie Burns...

To those who know her and her work, Stephanie Burns is something of an icon. For Stephanie Burns has taken a life path few could tread. Devoting her life to achieving a greater understanding of the learning process and what constitutes influential communication, Stephanie's work has not only dispelled the myths that surround these important areas, but has broken new ground in terms of the way we think about learning and communication.

Originally trained as a computer engineer in the US Army, Stephanie Burns started her career as an educator designing and teaching programs on the practical use of computers. Initially consulting for NASA, ABC-TV (America), General Electric and other large US corporates, Stephanie went on to research the subject of learning, working with some of the leading thinkers at that time in the areas of education and human behavior. During this period, Stephanie also worked as a trainer for the US Supercamp program, teaching her learning strategies to teenagers. Stephanie also developed the "Learning to Learn" program which she has since taught to more than 10,000 people worldwide.

Stephanie's work in the fields of learning and communication led her to Australia, where she again worked with teenagers in the Discovery Camp programs. Deciding to remain in Australia, Stephanie continued her research into how people learn, combining both practical experience, via the live seminar environment, with formal academic research and study.

In 1994, Stephanie commenced a PhD program with the University of South Australia, focusing on the emotional experience of the adult learner and goal

achievement. Stephanie's doctorate was awarded in April of 2000 and the results of her work have created a new understanding and awareness of the experience of adults in goal pursuit.

Stephanie's work has provided an unprecedented insight into why so many otherwise successful adults fail to sustain action when it comes to important goals – goals related to health and fitness, education, relationships etc. This new information forms the basis of Stephanie's work in both the past Goal Achievers Program and the current Leadership Labyrinth.

Since 1999, Stephanie has focused her efforts on the development of teaching methods for producing quality learning via technology. She offers much of her own course material in these forms as demonstrations of the methods in practice. She is also developing a new way of thinking about "environments" suitable to support learners who engage in on-line learning events. Several of these unique environments containing "learning how to learn" content can be viewed via her website (www.stephanieburns.com).

Stephanie Burns remains unique in her field due to her unquenchable thirst for understanding the how and why of learning. Her energy levels, combined with her knowledge of, and commitment to the learning and communication process, are extraordinary and clearly distinguish her from others in the education arena.

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